LINKING
RIDE LEARNING & ASSESSMENT
IN RHODE ISLAND SCHOOLS

Module 1: Exploring the Foundations of Classroom Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is a **process** that takes place **in the classroom** to **enable learning**. Because formative assessment takes place <u>in the classroom</u>, its locus of control is teachers. Formative assessment is not a one-time test; rather it is a <u>process</u> that takes place continuously to assure an ongoing cycle of evidence collection and feedback to help move learning forward. To <u>enable learning</u>, formative assessment practices are designed so that teachers **and** students use feedback to make ongoing adjustments. During formative assessment, learning tasks and student learning tactics are adjusted as needed. Formative assessment is strongly grounded in research in the areas of cognition, learning theory, and student motivation.

Module 2: Planning for Classroom Formative Assessment

Planning for formative assessment involves integrating four key elements into existing lesson or unit design. First, teachers clarify the learning goals. Second, they determine the success criteria against which learning goals will be measured. Third, they outline a learning progression to detail the pathways that students are likely to take as they move from emergent to secure knowledge. Fourth, teachers develop learning activities that will elicit evidence of learning matched to the success criteria and the learning progression. Through these enhanced lesson-planning techniques, teachers develop increased clarity about how to gather evidence of learning. More importantly, these planning elements provide teachers with an understanding of the types of in-the-moment feedback that will support students to make progress along the learning progression.

Module 3: Eliciting and Using Evidence of Learning

Teachers decide in their planning what types of learning tasks will be used to elicit evidence of learning. These tasks can take many different forms, from paper and pencil assessments, to performance tasks, to questioning techniques. Simply collecting evidence, however, is not enough. In classroom formative assessment, teachers review evidence immediately to determine any instructional changes needed, or, to provide specific feedback to students. Once gathered and analyzed, evidence is considered *formative* if an adjustment is made as a result of the evidence. Through formative assessment, teachers provide ongoing information to students about their status relative to learning goals.

Module 4: Engaging Students to Take Next Steps in Learning

Assessment that encourages students to learn fosters motivation by focusing on students' progress towards learning goals rather than their failure. Student motivation is enhanced when student work is reviewed against success criteria rather than compared to other students, when students are given tools that will promote self-reflection, and when students are clear about their next steps in learning. Self-assessment helps students reflect on the learning process, act on the feedback they have received and determine next steps. When students work together to evaluate progress towards learning goals, they are developing skills to engage in self-reflection and to internalize the learning goals. This fosters self-regulation and helps students develop skills to manage their own learning.

Module 5: Developing and Sustaining Formative Assessment Practice

At its core, formative assessment is a planned, evidence-based approach to improving student outcomes. In successful implementations, the look and feel of the classroom is dramatically different, as students play a far greater role in determining the pace and processes of learning. Implementing formative assessment represents a challenge because it is not a product, a program, or a system to adopt. Formative assessment implementation requires that school leaders and faculties work together to review current practices in data use, unit planning, classroom pedagogy, and student engagement. How this ongoing dialogue is structured, supported, and led within a school or district is essential to long-term implementation.

Linking Learning and Assessment: Professional Learning Framework

The instructional design follows the principles of adult learning theory and the Standards for Professional Development as established by Learning Forward. Each module includes activities that engage learners in:

- completing work in advance of each training session;
- reading and discussing current research and literature;
- sharing prior knowledge and experiences;
- exploring examples of practice through case analysis;
- reflecting on current beliefs and practices in their own schools;
- practicing strategies, tools, and processes;
- working in school-based teams to practice and apply new content and skills;
- completing assignments between sessions; and
- monitoring progress to demonstrate learning over time.

Participant expectations

The Rhode Island Department of Education is producing an online course in formative assessment that will be available beginning in September 2012. This online course, entitled *Linking Learning and Assessment,* will support Rhode Island educators to develop consistent understandings about classroom formative assessment practices. The online course design will include case reviews, vignettes of classroom formative assessment practices, classroom videos, student and teacher interviews, and examples of lesson plans and formative assessment classroom tools from Rhode Island teachers.

Linking Learning and Assessment was piloted with Rhode Island teachers during the winter of 2012. There were two primary goals of the pilot. The first was to field test the materials prior to their inclusion in the online course. To meet this goal, the course designers sought feedback from participants about course materials, readings, and activities. A second goal of the pilot was to incorporate the work and experiences of pilot teachers into the online course. Following the pilot, course participants opened their doors and allowed us to film them implementing formative assessment in their classrooms.

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Module One: Exploring the Foundations of Classroom Formative Assessment

Key messages

Formative assessment is not a test, it is not a set of instructional strategies, and it is not a program that can be adopted and quickly implemented. It is a complex set of parameters through which teachers design instructional practices that elicit evidence of learning, are more targeted to specific student needs, and more directly engage students in the learning process. Formative assessment practices can look quite different depending on many contextual factors, including the content area, curriculum expectations, and student grade level. In this way, developing formative assessment practices takes significant time, as it requires teachers to plan in new ways. Because formative assessment means many things to many people, this course begins with exploring what the research says, building a common understanding of the definition of formative assessment, and looking at how formative assessment fits in within a school or district system of student data use.

Module Lessons:

Lesson 1.1   Overview of course design
Lesson 1.2   Definition and overview of formative assessment
Lesson 1.3   Overview of formative assessment research
Lesson 1.4   Formative assessment as part of a coherent approach to data use

Associated readings:

1. Coherence, The Key To Next Generation Assessments (Herman)
2. Attributes of Effective Formative Assessment (CCSSO)
3. Connecting Formative Assessment Research to Practice (Learning Point Associates)
4. Balanced Assessment Systems (Stiggins)

Module 1 Learning Outcomes

Participants will:

·   Know that formative assessment is a process that involves teachers and students collecting and using evidence to move learning forward.

·   Understand the different elements of classroom formative assessment and the research that underlies the formative assessment model.

·   Understand the role that classroom formative assessment has within a comprehensive assessment system.

·   Learn the definitions of various "levels" of school and district data, and be able to distinguish between interim, benchmark, common formative, and classroom formative data.

Module 1 Success Criteria

I can reference the research base of formative assessment and describe how it benefits classroom instruction.

I can name the elements of the formative assessment process.

I can describe how formative assessment is different from other types of student assessment.

Our school team has developed an outline of current assessment practices.

Module 2: Planning for Classroom Formative Assessment

Key messages

Formative assessment **requires** that teachers plan in precise ways, using both familiar elements of standards-based lesson planning, as well as new planning techniques, such as learning progressions and success criteria. Like standards-based lesson planning, formative assessment planning *begins with the end in mind.* The planning process begins with teachers establishing in advance what students will learn, the level of rigor expected from the standard, and describing what it means to be "proficient". Learning progressions are then added to the planning process, as they help teachers to articulate the typical pathway students take as they build knowledge and skill in a particular domain. In formative assessment, learning progressions help teachers develop more accurate and precise assessment tasks, aligned to varied levels of the progression. Finally, planning involves teachers capturing the success criteria for students to determine when they have met the learning goals.

Module lessons:

Lesson 2.1   The relationship amongst key planning elements
Lesson 2.2   Building common language: Deconstructing content standards into big ideas and learning goals
Lesson 2.3   Developing and communicating success criteria
Lesson 2.4   Developing and using learning progressions

Associated readings:

1. Linking Formative Assessment to Scaffolding (Shepard)
2. Chapter 2 from Advancing Formative Assessment in Every Classroom (Brookhart and Moss)

Module 2 Learning Outcomes

Participants will:

· Understand key characteristics of learning goals and success criteria.

· Understand the relationship between learning goals and success criteria.

· Learn various ways to engage students in their learning goals.

· Understand that learning progressions represent progressively more complex ideas.

· Understand the theoretical construct for learning progressions.

Module 2 Success Criteria

I can develop big ideas for an upcoming lesson or unit plan.

I can write or revise effective learning goals.

I can develop success criteria for an upcoming lesson or unit plan.

I can use new strategies to share learning goals and success criteria with my students.

I can design a learning progression for an upcoming unit.

I can generate appropriate formative tasks aligned to key points along the learning progression.

Module 3: Eliciting and Using Evidence of Learning

Key Messages:

Formative assessment involves using strategies to elicit evidence of learning, and then using that evidence to design instruction. Throughout the formative assessment research, there is evidence that teachers are fairly comfortable adopting strategies to elicit evidence, but actually using the evidence to make changes can be quite challenging. In particular, teachers wonder about how to adapt instruction to ensure that all students are working in their "zone of proximal development" (Vygotsky, 1978) and how to develop strategies that help students use evidence to move forward in their learning. This module will focus on five primary strategies for eliciting evidence about student learning during instruction: use of written work, focused questioning techniques, classroom discussions, observations, and working with special populations. Once evidence is collected, teachers develop techniques to share specific feedback with students. To support student self-regulation, feedback should be descriptive, and should provide guidance about the next steps in learning.

Module lessons:

Lesson 3.1   Strategies for eliciting evidence
Lesson 3.2   Interpreting evidence of learning
Lesson 3.3   Using evidence of learning to guide next steps in instruction
Lesson 3.4   Using evidence of learning to provide descriptive feedback

Associated readings (required):

1. Using rubrics to promote thinking and learning (Andrade)
2. Research Brief: Five Key Strategies for Effective Formative Assessment (NCTM/Wiliam)

Module 3 Learning Outcomes

Participants will:

· Learn formative assessment strategies to collect evidence to adjust instruction.

· Learn that descriptive feedback is about the particular qualities of student learning with discussion or suggestions about what the student can do to improve.

· Understand that effective feedback is based on the learning goal and criteria for success.

· Learn how to use descriptive feedback so that it helps the student answer three questions: Where am I going? Where am I now? How can I close the gap?

Module 3 Success Criteria

I can use multiple strategies to elicit evidence of learning in my classroom.

I can provide descriptive feedback to students to include recognition of what they have accomplished and feedback on areas to improve.

I can align student feedback to the learning goals and success criteria.

I can make use of information I gather during formative assessment to shift my instructional practices.

I can use questions that prompt student thinking, reflection, and self-regulation.

Module Four: Engaging Students to Take Next Steps in Learning

Key Messages:

In classroom formative assessment, the student is the ultimate user of assessment information. Until this point the course has explored how the teacher has used formative assessment planning and strategies to elicit and communicate evidence of learning. These strategies help students understand the learning goals and develop a sense of what quality work will look like. The next critical step is for students to learn skills to self-regulate their learning, so that they are in charge of taking next steps. This marker, when students are aware of and understand what they must do next to move forward in learning, is the cornerstone of effective formative assessment implementation. This is a critically important shift from a traditional approach to assessment, where adults are the absolute decision-makers about how to manage and use assessment information. The teachers' responsibility is now to build a climate that encourages individual and peer-learning, risk taking, and exploration. Helping students become instructional resources for self and others involves modeling explicit practices, changing classroom routines, and revising approaches to grading.

Module lessons:

Lesson 4.1   Key features of classroom climate in formative assessment practice
Lesson 4.2   Engaging students as instructional resources for each other
Lesson 4.3   Engaging students as self-assessors

Associated readings:

1. Feedback that Fits (Brookhart)
2. Helping Students Understand Assessment (Chappuis)
3. Perils and Promise of Praise (Dweck)
4. Synopsis of the Power of Feedback (Hattie and Timperley, Center on Instruction)

Module 4 Learning Outcomes

Participants will:
- Learn to support students to take ownership of their learning by assessing their own work, using agreed-on-criteria for success.
- Learn through peer assessment how students analyze each other's work using guidelines or rubrics and provide descriptive feedback that supports continued improvement.
- Understand how a collaborative classroom climate allows for implementation of effective formative assessment practices.
- Explore the role of meta-cognition in student learning.

Module 4 Success Criteria

I can apply student self-assessment techniques in my classroom.

I can explain how a collaborative classroom environment promotes student learning.

I can use strategies that build students' abilities to act as instructional resources for each other.

I can use strategies that build students' self-regulation of learning.

I can describe strategies I am using to increase opportunities for meta-cognition in my classroom.

Module 5: Developing and Sustaining Formative Assessment Practice

Key Messages:

Participants will explore the role of school leaders to develop routines and structures that support formative assessment implementation including formative assessment walk-through protocols, peer-coaching models, professional development practices, strategies for data dialogue, and day-to-day leadership tools for supporting teacher knowledge in formative assessment. This approach to classroom formative assessment requires significant shifts in how schools approach teacher support, as the process of change required by formative assessment will be a slow one. If the substantial rewards of formative assessment are to be realized, teachers must be able to integrate these new learnings within their existing instructional routines, and incorporate these ideas into the patterns of their classroom work. Teacher leaders, coaches, and instructional leadership groups play a significant role in creating opportunities for ongoing teacher reflection to support formative assessment implementation. This module outlines key elements of research, and, through a case analysis, deepens understanding of how teacher practices can change over time as a result of continuous data use.

Module lessons:

Lesson 5.1   Putting it all together – Revisiting the formative assessment cycle
Lesson 5.2   Building based implementation and strategies for sustaining the work

Associated readings:

1. Leading Assessment for Learning (Chappuis)
2. What a difference a word makes (Stiggins)

Module 5 Learning Outcomes

Participants will:

- Explore strategies to implement formative assessment practices throughout their school in order to move learning forward.
- Develop collaborative approaches for teachers to explore how to address specific learning needs evidenced in the data.
- Learn the research about developing school-wide formative assessment practice.
- Learn about walk-through and other tools to document classroom formative assessment practices.

Module 5 Success Criteria

Schools teams will work together to:

Integrate elements of formative assessment practices into building observation or walk-through protocols.

Develop a plan to provide teacher support and training to implement formative assessment practices.

Integrate formative assessment practices into data review/data dialogue sessions.

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